Fixation of prices under Conditional Access System

†4582. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have fixed prices under Conditional Access System;

(b) if so, whether Government have selected any grounds for fixation of prices; and

(c) if so, the detail of such grounds and the names of the parties consulted by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Under the provisions of Cable Television Networks Regulation Amendment Act, 2002, Central Government may specify the maximum amount which a cable operator may demand from the subscriber for receiving the programmes transmitted in the Basic Service Tier of Free to Air channels. Accordingly, a "Task Force" has been constituted comprising of representatives of all the stakeholders of this Industry including broadcasters, manufacturers, MSOs, cable operators and representatives of Consumer Organisations. The terms of reference of the Task Force *inter alia,* included making recommendation about the size and cost of basic Service Tier of free-to Air Channels.

Based on the inputs and wide consultation from a vast section of the Industry and an exercise conducted by the Cost and Accounts Branch of Ministry of Finance, the Task Force has decided the cost of Basic Service Tier of Free-to-Air Channels, which has been approved by the Government. A notification is being issued in this regard very shortly.

Proposal to revamp AIR and DD

4583. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to revamp AIR and Doordarshan at an enormous cost;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether AIR and DD are incurring losses and are unable to match private players in quality and content of the programmes;

(d) if so, the revenue and expenditure of AIR and DD for the last three years with their average audience/viewership ratings for the last one year in relation to their major three to four competitors, during peak and non-peak timings, separately; and

(e) how would this situation be reversed in the proposed reorganisation exercise, apart from hiring expert advisors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD) : (a) and (b) Prasar Bharati has informed that revamping of AIR and DD is a continuous process.

(c) Prasar Bharati as a Public Service Broadcaster, has a mandate to educate, entertain and inform the people and is not guided by commercial considerations. It would not be appropriate to compare Prasar Bharati with private broadcaster, which operate solely on profit basis. The content of programmes telecast/ broadcast over DD/AIR are of high quality so far as their national, social, educational, cultural and informative values are concerned.

(d) and (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

FDI in TV News uplinking

4584. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been permitted in television news uplinking upto 26 per cent of the total paid-share capital;

(b) if so, the pattern of holding prescribed for balance 74 per cent share capital;

(c) whether as per the existing guidelines, the largest single shareholder can acquire the management of the company even if it happens to be a foreign media house; and

(d) if so, whether Government are aware that such an eventuality may compromise India's sovereignty and cultural integrity and homogeneity?